

## **Syngenta launches I-CLEAN - Haats to GrAMs project in Varanasi**

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**Varanasi, April 01, 2021:** In what will give the much needed boost to rural economy, Syngenta, in the first phase, will be upgrading five rural haats (Mandis) in Varanasi district under its flagship CSR project- I-CLEAN (Inculcating Cleanliness, Learning, Education, Awareness and New Habits), which has been inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*. **The foundation stone for the upgradation of the first Haat (Mandi) in Baraura, Varanasi was held recently.** Baraura Rural Haat will be the 23rd project Syngenta India is taking up after the successful implementation of similar projects in Bihar, Karnataka and Gujarat benefitting more than two lakh people.

These Rural Haats (Mandis) will be upgraded to the level of Grameen Rural Agriculture Markets (GrAMs) by Syngenta. These will also be upgraded to facilities like sorting, grading and e-linking in line with the Central government's initiative to link 22500 rural markets.

Laying the foundation stone for the **Baraura Mandi, Mr Neel Ratan Singh Patel, Hon'ble Member of Legislative Assembly, Sewapuri**, said, "The aesthetically designed rural market will make business activities more pleasurable. Solar electrification will add hours to the market timings, which will lead to more business hours and footfall. Better facilities will lead to significant improvement in the health conditions of the community. Safe drinking water facility will remove the water-borne diseases. These changes will fuel the economy of the surrounding villages."

The foundation stone was laid in presence of **Dr KC Ravi, Chief Sustainability Officer, Syngenta India Limited; Mr Ramshanker Patel, Sarpanch, Baraura Gram Panchayat; Mr Ajay Kumar, Member, CII UP State Council and Managing Director, Blacksmith Industries Pvt. Ltd., Varanasi and Mr Avani Mohan Singh, Executive Director, Haritika.**

"Under I-CLEAN project, eight new state-of-the-art infrastructures along with solar lighting, drinking water, garbage collection/disposal, toilet blocks and other facilities will be constructed at Baraura Rural Haat. Toilet block, shops and storerooms will be repaired. Entire Haat area will be covered with soling and solar lights. Bore wells will be provided for the benefit of vendors and buyers who visit the Haat on a daily basis," said **Dr KC Ravi, Chief Sustainability Officer, Syngenta India Limited.**

Dr Ravi informed further that Syngenta has signed an MoU with CII and this project will be executed by the NGO Haritika.

Speaking at the event, **Mr Ajay Kumar, Member, CII UP State Council and MD, Blacksmith Industries Pvt. Ltd., Varanasi** said, "We are excited to join Syngenta in I-CLEAN project which is the first step towards diversifying the agriculture market structure of India. Given India's fragmented land-holding scenario, it is often unviable for small farmers to bring their produce to APMC mandis or other wholesale markets. The upgraded GrAMs are envisaged to work as primary aggregation points for farmers, where they can sell their produce directly to consumers. Syngenta's modern infrastructures will give a great boost to the rural economy in Baraura".

It is worth mentioning that Baraura Haat has been operational for the last several years, functioning seven days of the week. People from nearby 10 to 15 villages depend on this Haat for their day-to-day needs. There are more than 100 vendors and farmers, who use this Haat to sell their produce.

“The upgraded infrastructure will bring in improved access to water, resolve privacy and safety concerns for women with separate sanitation facilities for men and women. Raised platforms and sheds help vendors reduce losses as their wares, vegetables and fruits are shielded from direct sunlight, rain, etc. “This state-of-the-art infrastructure will provide relief to farmers and traders from the heat during harsh summers,” Dr Ravi added.

The government's decision to upgrade rural Haats (unregulated periodic rural markets) to GrAMs is in line with the vision of doubling farmer's income. The upgraded GrAMs are envisaged to work as primary aggregation points for farmers, where they can sell their produce directly to consumers or bulk buyers - retailers/processors.

The third-party impact assessment of Syngenta's I-CLEAN project has shown that the rural vendors and farmers have seen an increase of 42% in their income after the project was implemented. It is, therefore, proved that this could be a game changer in achieving the objective of doubling farmer's income.

Syngenta I-CLEAN is a rural transformation project under the CSR initiatives of Syngenta India Limited. This flagship project of Syngenta CSR was started in 2014 from Bihar.

### **About Syngenta**

**Syngenta** is a leading agriculture company helping to improve global food security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources. Through world-class science and innovative crop solutions, our 28,000 people in over 90 countries are working to transform how crops are grown. We are committed to rescuing land from degradation, enhancing biodiversity and revitalizing rural communities.

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### **Media Contact:**

**R Vaithyanathan**

**+91 9711992499**

**[r.vaithyanathan@syngenta.com](mailto:r.vaithyanathan@syngenta.com)**